**19th Sunday of Ordinary Time – Cycle C**

Wis 18: 6-9; Heb 11: 1-2, 8-19; Lk 12: 32-48

August 10/11, 2013

“Do not be afraid any longer, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom.”

My, O my! These are words our world desperately needs to hear, a world so overcome by fear. God is telling us not to fear any longer what we have feared for so long, because He is giving us his Kingdom, no less!

What role does fear and faith play in your life? Some say it is fear that keeps us from the Kingdom. Some say that fear is the activator of all the vices in life. We fear getting caught, therefore we lie. We fear not having something, so we steal it. We fear loneliness, so we commit adultery. We fear the future, so we become stingy and lacking in charity. We fear what people have done to us and others in the past, so we lose hope in humankind. And on and on…

Whereas fear gives rise to the vices in life, faith gives rise to all virtues.

We speak the truth because we believe truth is from God. We love because we have faith in love’s power to redeem. We are generous with others because we have faith in God’s providence, in his care for us. We are patient with others because we have faith and believe all things work together in God’s will. We have hope because we believe and trust God’s promises.

Yes, faith and confidence are the opposite of fear, it would seem. WE MUST NOT FEAR!!

It is only when we overcome our fear with faith, it is only then that we can, as the Gospel says, “Gird our loins and light our lamps and await the Master’s return.” It is only when we banish fear from our lives, only then can we with hopeful, faithful expectation be prepared to immediately open the doors of our lives when He comes and knocks. It is only when we have faith, real faith, will we be able to avoid the sins that fear generates in our lives, sins against God’s will that are described in today’s Gospel.

So I ask you, “Do you believe? Do you have faith? Do you truly believe that God loves you so much that He has given you his Kingdom, and nothing less?

Yes, God has given us the Kingdom and because of this, we need not fear. He has called us, and continually calls us to embrace, to accept His Kingdom.

What is the Kingdom? God’s Kingdom is a kingdom of peace. It is a kingdom of justice. It is a kingdom where there is neither Jew or Greek, slave or free. It is a kingdom of unity where all are one and share in the same Holy Spirit. It is a kingdom of joy, a kingdom of love, a kingdom of hope. It is an everlasting kingdom.

Where is God’s kingdom? Gods’ kingdom is here and now. It is present on earth and in heaven. “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” It is present everywhere where God’s will is accomplished. It is present deep within you if you are in a state of grace. It is present within a sacramental marriage, in your families, in our parish, in our diocese, indeed in our Churc[h.

Who is the Kingdom? God’s Kingdom is his Son Jesus. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Kingdom, the full revelation of the Father on earth. He is the full expression of God’s will, the full expression of God’s love to each and every one of us. When we listen to and see Jesus, we listen to and see everything that God the Father wishes to reveal to us this side of heaven. Jesus is the way to the Father. Jesus is the way to heaven where we will see God face to face in all his glory and splendor, in an unveiled manner, in a brilliant and unimaginable way. Jesus Christ, and the Church he established on earth, the Mystical Body of Christ, is the Kingdom of God now present to us, given us by God the Father for our salvation.

Do you believe this?

Only with faith will we be able to, as the Gospel tells us we must do, place our real treasure in heaven and not in things of this world. Only if we come to believe that the Kingdom of God is among us and is immensely richer than anything we now have, will we be prepared to do his will and act with mercy toward others, especially those who are most difficult to love. Only if we believe that it is in Jesus Christ and in his Church that we find grace, mercy and salvation, will we come to dispel all our fears. Only if we come to know that Jesus is the Christ and the Church is his faithful true witness will we be able to come to true faith and peace in this our world.

“Fear not little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom.”   
  
Yes, with faith we cast out all our fears and we grow in virtue. With faith in Jesus and in his Church we come to know the Kingdom of God. Without faith, without virtue, without Jesus, without the Church we succumb to worldly fears.

Let us not fear. Let us live in the presence of God all the days of our lives, and expectantly await our entrance into the heavenly presence of God, with all his angels and saints.